

Seattle is poster-struck

Images beckon everywhere

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT Section E

NW natives: Who are they?

Friendly, conservative, transplanted PACIFIC

Totaling up state taxes

Average family may pay \$2,000+

by Bill Dietrich
Times staff reporter

Meet George Washington. Not the George Washington who is the father of his country. We mean a typical Evergreen state father of two lovable but expensive moppets, one of whom is indenturing George to an orthodontist while the other relentlessly lobbies Pop for a home computer.

With an income of \$25,000 a year, stoic George and his loyal wife Martha find life hard enough without remembering state taxes equal an average \$1,000 from the pocket or purse of every man, woman and child this year.

Nor do they like to recall that additional licenses, earnings, tuition, timber sales, the lottery, federal grants and other "nontax revenue" — that's what the bureaucrats call it — will allow state spending to exceed \$1,800 per person, or nearly \$8 billion a year.

Good ol' George can't help wondering if such averages, which include business taxes, apply to his family. Or how the dime-here and dollar-there method of state taxation seems to add up to more than the cost of a wild weekend in Reno.

Legislative staffers have asked the same question. They took just the major taxes which individuals pay directly and calculated the effect of recent tax increases. The result was an average annual direct tax bill of \$429.25 for each of Washington's 4.29 million people.

But that ignores more than three-quarters of state spending and revenue. And it sheds little light on families such as George's. So curious George has tried to add up his own tax bill for a year.

George's "year" includes the tax increases recently signed into law, but does not count the sales tax on food, due to expire June 30. Nor did George try to predict any further tax revisions which may occur this spring before the Legislature adjourns.

The sales tax sorta snuck up on our hero. It used to seem the kind of nuisance that simply produced penny change for the poker jar. Now the taxman figures George's family will spend about 40 percent of its \$25,000 income on taxable goods — which means \$818 in sales tax this year.

The state's share of the 7.8 percent rate — 6.5 cents — equals \$660.

George should be surprised his sales tax bill is not worse. After all, that \$660 is less than half the \$1,363 which one would arrive at by simply dividing the state's expected annual sales-tax revenue by the number of households in the state, 1.54 million. Why does the Washington family seem to get off so easily?

Partly because many families have more money to spend than George. And partly because some of that sales tax comes from businesses buying from

See TAXES on A 4



Lon Skeesick / Seattle Times

Another crab boat sinks off Alaska

by Susan Gilmore
Times staff reporter

DUTCH HARBOR, Alaska — Another crab boat, the second in as many days and the fourth in the past month, capsized yesterday in the Bering Sea, leaving one woman missing in the icy waters.

Five other crew members of the Sea Hawk were rescued by the Coast Guard cutter Boutwell after spending nearly an hour floating in survival suits.

The missing woman, the boat's cook, was tied to a life ring but had no survival suit.

The boat was based in Dutch Harbor but owned by Union Bay Fish of Seattle, the Coast Guard said. The five rescued crewmen were tentatively identified as from Tacoma.

The Coast Guard identified the boat's skipper as Bill Maxwell. Other rescued crewmen were Corey Eisenbarth, Allen Dille, Bruce Blythe and Gregory Sage. The Coast Guard was uncertain of their hometown, but Sgt. Gawaine LaFavers of the Unalaska, Alaska, police said he understood all five are from Tacoma.

All were in good condition, suffering mild hypothermia, and were expected to be brought ashore early this morning.

The missing woman was believed to be Justina Stepetin, of Akutan, Alaska, according to a friend of Stepetin's in Dutch Harbor. Akutan is a small fishing town near Dutch Harbor.

Smith said the 73-foot Sea Hawk issued a mayday call about 3:30 p.m. Seattle time. The boat was about 80 miles southwest of Dutch Harbor, fighting 30-knot winds, 8 foot swells, blowing snow and visibility of only a half-mile.

The Coast Guard was continuing the search for the missing woman last night. However, the life expectancy in the 33-degree water without a survival suit is about seven minutes.

Smith said the cause of the accident was not known. The capsized boat sank late last night.

The Boutwell was on routine fisheries patrol about 40 miles away when it received the Sea Hawk's distress call.

The Sea Hawk accident came only one day after the Arctic Dreamer, a Seattle-based crab boat, capsized and sank about 15 miles north of Dutch Harbor. Six crew members — five from the Seattle area — were rescued from a lifeboat after nearly two hours in the freezing waters of the Bering Sea.

The Arctic Dreamer sank in the same area where two Anacortes crab boats were lost last month. The Americus capsized Feb. 14 and sank with seven crewmen aboard. Its sister ship Altair, also with seven crew members, disappeared without a trace the same day.

Another Coast Guard spokesman in Juneau said of the spate of crab boat sinkings, "I'm not sure if it is considered unusual. The weather is always pretty bad this time of year."

She was lucky twice

by Susan Gilmore
Times staff reporter

DUTCH HARBOR, Alaska — She very nearly signed on as the cook of the Anacortes crab boat Americus before it capsized and sank in the Bering Sea.

And Friday she spent three hours floating in a survival suit after her boat, the Arctic Dreamer, rolled over and sank near the grave of the Americus.

Now she doesn't know whether she's jinxed or lucky.

But Sue Pierce says she's had enough of crab fishing in the stormy waters on the edge of nowhere.

Will she fish again? Pierce pondered the question, sitting in a Dutch Harbor bar just hours after she was rescued with five others from the Bering Sea. "I have a fishing pole," she said, giddy from her escape from death. "I'll stick to trout."

Pierce, 24, from Seattle, was the only woman aboard the Seattle-based Arctic Dreamer, which was tossed on its side Friday afternoon by gale-force winds. For more than three hours, the six crew members prayed and yelled for help while their lifeboat bobbed in the 12-foot seas. They were rescued by the Starlite, another crab boat, about 10 miles north of Dutch Harbor.

"Out there you don't know if you're going to live or die," said Pierce, a graduate of Shorecrest High School. "The big swells hit you and the worst thing I could think of is, if I die, who's going to get my horse? Who's going to get my dog?"

Others on board the 98-foot vessel were skipper Les Moren and Roger Parmenter, both of Seattle; Don Demail of Bremerton; Michael Walsh of Vashon Island; and Brian Lehman of Cordova, Alaska.

A Coast Guard investigator will arrive in Dutch Harbor today to try to determine what caused the ship to capsize. Dutch Harbor police said the Arctic Dreamer had some crab on board but was far

See LUCKY on A 4

Convention Center: Site is key question

by David Schaefer
Times staff reporter

It's a bittersweet problem, a mixed blessing, a gift with strings attached, an opportunity rife with pitfalls.

Building a new state convention center in Seattle is a task loaded with conflicts, and little time remains before a key decision will be made — where to build the center — in a countdown that has taken years to get this far.

This week, the Seattle City Council and School Board are to give their opinions on a proposed land swap that would allow the convention center to be built at the Seattle Center on the site of the present High School Memorial Stadium.

For the City Council, it's a question of backing the mayor's push for a Seattle Center site, or sitting back and letting downtown interests hold out for their preferred site spanning Interstate 5.

Some have urged council members to do more than make a choice. In hearings last week, neighborhood groups urged the council to actively oppose a second freeway lid just north of the one at Freeway Park.

Where to put a \$90 million convention center — a decision that actually will be made March 31 by the nine-member board of the Washington State Trade and Convention Center — is coming down to a photo finish. A third site, near the Kingdome, has been considered, but it just doesn't seem to be in the same horse race.

When the Legislature last year authorized state convention-center bonds — to be paid off with a higher hotel-motel tax in King County — lawmakers had in mind the freeway site.

Those in tourist and retail businesses were in agreement. But neighborhood and other community groups have fought that site, arguing that it would harm the adjacent First Hill neighborhood, where senior citizens have been able to find comfortable, affordable places to live.

The Seattle Center site gained momentum, fueled by the mayor's backing and the attractiveness of a land swap with the school district.

There are conflicts in this struggle besides downtown versus the neighborhoods, business versus housing. For one, state and city governments have wound up at odds.

The convention center is a state project. If it doesn't earn money, the state treasury will have to supplement its operating costs. If the King County hotel-motel tax doesn't earn enough to pay off the construction bonds, state revenues must be tapped.

City interests argue that a convention center over the freeway could steal business from the Seattle Center, drawing off city revenues.

But others, worried partly about the state treasury, wonder whether Seattle could attract the conventions it needs to support a center if delegates couldn't walk to their hotels, if they had to ride a monorail or bus to the convention center.

Members of the convention-center board, themselves, have been in the crossfire. Sometimes they have been accused of leaning and listening only to the freeway-touting downtown businessmen. Sometimes they've been accused of overlooking their responsibility to the state as they consider proposals to help the financially ailing Seattle Center.

In a grim economic time, few have faulted the convention center's potential to create 7,000 new jobs and pull \$164 million a year from the pocketbooks of free-spending out-of-state tourists.

But besides being hungry, Seattle-area interests have shown that they are finicky, as well.

■ A closer look at the convention-center debate and the competing proposals. **Issues, A 18.**

El Salvador war plan was used in Vietnam

Compiled from news services

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — Government troops will soon open a new campaign which in many ways is similar to one used in Vietnam, informed sources say.

The plan involves technical help from officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development, some of them slated for full-time assignment to villages, according to the sources, most of whom spoke on condition they not be identified.

Some compared the plan to the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support Agency — known as CORDS — that provided medical care and economic relief to war victims in Vietnam in the late 1960s. It was coordinated with Operation Phoenix, aimed at liquidating the Viet Cong underground in villages.

The CORDS program was viewed as a failure because of the Vietnamese government's inability to administer it and because of rampant corruption.

One U.S. General Accounting Office audit of CORDS in 1968-70 could account for only \$339 million of the allotted \$2.1 billion.

Asked if the U.S. government expected corruption to be a problem in the Salvadoran campaign, one source replied, "Of course."

The plan, said to be contingent on the Salvadoran government getting an additional \$110 million in U.S. aid, calls for about 10,000 soldiers to sweep through a key province in east-central El Salvador.

One aim of the month-long sweep will be to destroy guerrilla strongholds; another would be to cut off routes through which the rebels receive military supplies.

It would be the biggest operation since the civil war started 41 months ago, with a toll to date of 42,000 people killed. The largest previous operation, lasting three weeks in February in northeastern Morazan province, involved 6,000 troops. Guerrillas took over a Salvadoran town in a different part

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